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**NU General Secretary to Europe’s Intellectual and Political Elites:  
“The West must stop equating a rational critique of  
Islamist terrorism with Islamophobia”**

FRANKFURT, Germany: In the wake of yet another [devastating terror attack](#) in Europe—which killed or injured over 140 on the streets of Barcelona—Germany’s leading newspaper published a [lengthy interview](#) with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) General Secretary Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf. Headlined “Terrorism and Islam are Intimately Connected,” the interview was placed on the front page of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*’s widely-read *Feuilleton* (arts and culture) section, which also addresses moral issues that transcend partisan politics. Within hours of its publication, the interview was trending as one of the most popular articles shared in Germany.

Promoted as a *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) exclusive, the newspaper’s internet home page linked to a description of the interview which reads:

“‘There is a crystal clear relationship between fundamentalism, terror and the basic assumptions of Islamic orthodoxy,’ says Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf, General Secretary of the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia... This is particularly true in regard to the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The position of Muslims vis-à-vis the State and its legal system are also problematic and lead to segregation and enmity. ‘Too many Muslims view civilization, and the peaceful co-existence of people of different faiths, as something they must combat’ says Yahya Cholil Staquf. As a result, the West’s growing fear of Islam is completely understandable. And it is essential that people speak clearly about the connection between Islam and terrorism: ‘The West must stop equating the rational discussion of these issues with Islamophobia.’”

“‘We must reach a point [of societal consensus], so that any [fundamentalist] view of Islam that posits the traditional norms of Islamic jurisprudence as absolutes, will be rejected out of hand as false. Religious teachings must be contextualized and religious values aligned with social reality. And it must be crystal clear, to all, that state laws have precedence and will prevail [in the event of perceived conflict between Islamic tradition and state law],’ said the Islamic scholar in his interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.”

One month earlier, the NU General Secretary delivered a video address to senior EU officials and representatives of the 28 Member States at the headquarters of the European Council, which defines the EU’s overall political direction and policies, as part of a broader expert presentation. [That address](#), and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* interview, come at a time of acute social and political discord—within and between EU Member States—regarding the volatile issues of mass migration, the distribution of refugees and counter-terrorism policy. The NU aims to reduce polarization between Muslim communities and the West, and help generate the societal consensus required to address the threat posed by Islamist extremism and terror. If heeded, [NU/Bayt ar-Rahmah recommendations](#) could help reconcile severe policy differences—regarding Islam and Muslims—that threaten to rend the fabric of social harmony in Germany and other Western nations.

[Read the FAZ Interview \(in English and German\)](#)

[View the EU Council TWP \(4-minute\) video address here.](#)